

INSIDER

the guide

Our experts help you to make the most of a camper, eat politely in India and travel in style

THE BIG THREE...

'We have a one-month sabbatical this year and would like to travel somewhere interesting, but not too expensive. We have been thinking of driving a camper van around America but wondered if you had any other suggestions?'

Helen Law by email

WE CAN HELP!

Our experts are waiting to suggest ideas for your next trip. Write to us at asklpmagazine@bbc.com

Head to southern Italy and discover places such as Trani, a seaport in Puglia



TOM HALL
Tom is Lonely Planet Publications' UK travel editor

1 ITALY

Europe's continent-wide love of nights under canvas means you needn't travel far for a camper van adventure. With a gorgeous village, art-rich town or ancient ruin every

few miles, Italy rewards a lazy exploration better than most. In a month you could cover the country from top to tail, driving into the heart of smaller spots and camping on the outskirts of larger cities so you don't have to face the traffic. Don't stay long in the north – the mezzogiorno (south), especially Puglia and Basilicata, will feel less visited and more of an adventure, as well as being cheaper. Save money by using smaller roads, thus avoiding tolls, and using markets to self-cater. The one downside is that campsite accommodation isn't anything more than functional. Instead, seek out agriturismo – farms offering accommodation – which also allow camping. Try agricamping.it. Camper Tours Italy offers rentals at several locations as well as online touring tips (£132-£217 a day; campertoursitaly.com). Lease or buy camper vans at [IdeaMerge \(ideamerge.com\)](http://IdeaMerge.com).



ROBERT REID
Robert is Lonely Planet's New York-based USA travel editor

2 USA

Fifty years ago John Steinbeck wrote *Travels with Charley*, and that – plus a recession and weakening dollar – could mean more camping-style trips in the USA in 2010. You could fill a month national-park-hopping in the west. Buy an annual national park pass for £51 (nps.gov/fees_passes.htm), and start in San Francisco, where a month-long rental from camperusa.com, that sleeps four, is less than £3,200.

Make a clockwise loop, stopping in Redwood National Park (nps.gov/redw/index.htm) for hiking, then head north to Oregon's Crater Lake (nps.gov/crla/index.htm), Seattle and Orcas Island, reached by car ferry, before heading east to Glacier National Park (nps.gov/glac/index.htm) in Montana. Consider a detour southwest into volcanic Craters of the Moon National Park (nps.gov/crmo/index.htm) and Utah's red fudge landscape of Arches National Park (nps.gov/arch/index.htm), then the Grand Canyon (nps.gov/grca/index.htm), best from the remote north rim.



JANE THOMPSON
Jane is regional publisher in Lonely Planet's Australia office

3 AUSTRALIA

Fly into Sydney, pick up a camper van and tell the airline you'll meet them in Far North Queensland. The route from Sydney to Cairns is an unforgettable entrée to the Sunburnt Country. Follow the Pacific and Bruce Highways up the coast, through cities and small towns, bushland, beaches and rainforest. It's paved road all the way, and accessible to vehicles of all sizes. There are also accessible diversions from the route, such as magnificent Waterfall Way, running from Armidale to Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. Off roads like this are dirt tracks into the hinterland and its national parks and they vary in condition, but that doesn't mean you can't explore; just seek local advice about road conditions first (and check the terms of your rental). The chance to bush camp in national parks and more comfortably in private campgrounds is abundant. For comparison quotes from several rental companies see discovery-campervans.com.au; a four-berth camper van will set you back £1,550 per month, depending on the model and insurance excess.



